

Before Clinton and Obama

By RICHA VARMA

Women and African Americans who ran for America's top job.

Women Candidates for President and Vice President



1872
Victoria C. Woodhull, the first woman to run for U.S. President, even before women had the right to vote.



1964
Margaret Chase Smith, first woman to seek a major party's nomination for President.

Courtesy, Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism



1968
Charlene Mitchell, first African American woman to run for President, on a Communist Party ticket.



1972
Shirley Chisholm, first African American woman to seek a major party's nomination for President.



1984
Geraldine Ferraro, first woman to be nominated for Vice President by a major party.



2000
Elizabeth Dole ran for the Republican Party nomination.



2004
Carol Moseley Braun, first African American Senator, ran for the Democratic Party nomination.



2008
Hillary Clinton, former First Lady, seeking the Democratic Party nomination.

Election year 2008 brings the first real chance of electing a woman or an African American to the Oval Office—a prospect of change in the uninterrupted pattern of white male U.S. presidents since George Washington took the oath of office more than two centuries ago.

But while the battle for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination between New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton and Illinois Senator Barack Obama offers voters a novel choice, there were others before them.

Nearly five decades before American women even got the right to vote in 1920, stockbroker and publisher Victoria C. Woodhull became the first woman candidate for President, running on the Equal Rights Party ticket in 1872. The only other woman to run for President in the 19th century was Belva Ann Lockwood of the National Equal Rights Party in 1884. Incidentally, she was also the first woman

admitted to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court.

After more than seven decades with no prominent women candidates, Maine Republican Margaret Chase Smith became the first woman to seek a major party's presidential nomination, in 1964. Smith, who was elected to the Senate in 1948 and served 32 years in Congress, finished a far second to the eventual nominee, Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater, in the balloting at the 1964 Republican National Convention.

On the 100th anniversary of Woodhull's historic bid, Shirley Chisholm's run for the 1972 Democratic nomination marked another first in U.S. politics. The seven-term New York Congresswoman captured five percent of the total 3,016 delegate votes at the party convention, breaking all records for a woman candidate of any party.

Clinton has now come further than any woman candidate in history, winning more than 1,400 delegates so far. Her main oppo-

nent, Obama, has won more than 1,500 delegates, outdoing any previous African American candidate. A candidate has to win at least 2,025 delegates to become the Democratic presidential nominee.

The woman who has come closest to the U.S. presidency is one who has never been a candidate for the post: Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives since 2007. Although she was elected only by the residents of her congressional district in California, she is second in line to the presidency after Vice President Dick Cheney. The Presidential Succession Act of 1947 specifies who would take control of the government if the President and Vice President were unable to perform their offices. However, the law has never been used. Only men elected President or their Vice Presidents have ever occupied the Oval Office.

Two African Americans—Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice—have been fourth in line for the presidency because of their posi-

tions as Secretary of State for President George W. Bush.

Several women have sought, or won, their party's nomination to become Vice President of the United States. In 1972, former Texas state legislator Frances (Sissy) Farenthold finished second in balloting for Vice President during the Democratic National Convention.

A "Black power" activist and professor at the University of California in Los Angeles, Angela Davis, ran for Vice President on the Communist Party ticket in 1980 and 1984.

Another first was achieved by third-term Congresswoman Geraldine A. Ferraro, who became the first woman to run for Vice President on a major party's ticket when she was chosen by Democratic nominee Walter F. Mondale as his running mate in 1984. They were defeated by Republican President Ronald Reagan and Vice President George H.W. Bush.

Among the most notable African

African American Candidates for President



© AP/WWP

1984 & 1988
Jesse Jackson



CHARLIE NEIBERGALL © AP/WWP

1996, 2000 & 2008
Alan Keyes



BEBETO MATTHEWS © AP/WWP

2004
Al Sharpton



JAE C. HONG © AP/WWP

2008
Barack Obama

American candidates who have run for U.S. President is civil rights activist Jesse Jackson. He campaigned for the Democratic nomination twice, in 1984 and 1988. While Jackson gained 21 percent of the popular vote during the party primaries and caucuses, he won only eight percent of the delegates in his first run. In the second campaign, however, he more than doubled his previous tally and made a surprising second-place finish to Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis at the party convention.

Having served as an assistant secretary of state in Reagan's administration, Alan Keyes, an African American, campaigned for the Republican Party nomination in 1996, 2000 and again in this election. He dropped out early this year after winning no delegates in several primaries.

Another civil rights activist, Al Sharpton, ran a colorful but unsuccessful campaign seeking the Democratic Party presidential nomination in 2004.

Now, Obama's campaign has made history. He has won a majority of delegates in more than 30 state primaries and caucuses, and by May had more delegates than any other candidate for the Democratic Party's nomination. His landslide victories in many states show that white as well as black Americans voted for him in large numbers. As the son of a white American woman from Kansas and a black father from Kenya, he has brought a unique perspective to this election.

No matter whether Clinton or Obama wins the Democratic Party nomination, and no matter whether either wins the presidency in the upcoming election against Republican Party nominee John McCain, their candidacies have already broken barriers and changed perceptions about what is possible in American politics.



For more information:

Obama's cross-racial appeal

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/11/AR2008011101414_pf.html

Campaign to elect a woman President

http://www.americanwomenpresidents.org/the_campaign.htm

Elections 2008

<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/>